Boston May 1st 1781

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

My Dear friends

My last to you was in the care of Mr. Thomas Winthrop, dated febry 23d, since which time no opportunity has offerd for your city —

By Mr. Winthrop you will receive a remittance of Lires from Messrs. Sears and Smith on my account, which I beg you will pass to my Cr in conformity —

Abt 6 or 8 weeks ago was sent into New Port Rhode-Island the sloop Union Capt. Dept. Ekin she has been taken by a british privateer on her passage from Teneriffe to St. Eustatia and retaken by two American privateers — the Dean & Protector — On her first arrival, I threw in a claim for the vessel and cargo, and should have recovered the whole, if while the matter was depending — intelligence has not been received that Great Britain has publish'd a manifesto and orders reprisals to be made on dutch property; this is consider'd by our Maritime courts as a declaration of war, consequently the provision that —

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Congress had made for recaptures was the only principle for recovery of any part — this provision gave up the one h/f as a salvage to the Captors. I have accordingly order'd an equal diction of the cargo and lodg'd your one h/f part in the hands of our friend Mr. Wm Corlis of Providence, and have order'd him to sell the wines, if a price is high as one dollar ₰ gallon can be obtain'd — he has made some progress in the Sale, as soon as the bills come to hand I shall remitt them — One dollar ₰ gallon will make your one h/f part cargo amt. to abt. five thousand dollars in bills of exchange unless there should be great leakage, which I do not apprehend — the Sloop is sold for abt. £260 lm. in bills of exchange, which shall be forwarded as soon as rec'd. — I set off for Providence tomorrow, and if I receive the bills timely for this conveyance, shall enclose them — Inclosed you have the Capt.'s Protest &c. copies of which shall forward

The Manifesto of Britain has filled us with surprize, and were it for the blow she has struck at St. Eustatia, Demarara &c we should rather be pleased than not, at an event that flatters us with a speedy determination of the war, and to the general advantage of the combined belligerent powers — At least we immagine aright to draw this conclusion, when we reflect that Holland (say the Seven Provs.) alone ~~has~~ heretofore curbed the insolence of Britain in her natural element; and tho we are satisfied that the navies of the two powers do not bear the same proportion to each other they did in the reign of Charles the 2cond of England, yet the large addition that France and Spain throw in the scale of your provinces will give a very decisive balance, in favour of the general confederacy —

Our affairs wear as favourable an aspect, as we have reason to expect — Genl. Morgans victory over Tarleton was so entirely

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compleat that the war at the Southward now wears a new face —

The French have lately exerted themselves and gained great honour in a naval engagement with Ad. Hothbuthnot — the advantage was on the side of the French tho' the victory not decisive, by reason of Monsr. Des touch being much inferior in point of metal —

In this event, however we have one disagreeable reflection — the British defeated the joint object of Gen. Washington and our ally, which was to throw a body of troops into Virginia to whom Arnold must instantly have fallen a sacrifice, and who, joint operations with Gen. Green, must inevitably have cut off the retreat of Cornwallis — this was effected by the British Admirals withdrawing from the action and getting possession of Chesapeake Bay — so capricious is fortune! at the moment we had every thing to expect, we found ourselves, dis=

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disappointed without the attainment of an object. On the arrival of the French Fleet at Chesapeak - without the intervention of an obstacle - depended a final close of the war at the Southward —

Genl. Green has fought Cornwallis but one genl. action - in his letter to Congress he has the modesty to suppose himself rather worsted - not beaten - three days after he finds Cornwallis retreating, leaving his sick, wounded, and the prisoners he has taken, on the field of batale - these circumstances are strong evidences of an advantage on our side - Our last advices from Genl. Green, inform us that he was making exertions to come up with Cornwallis - we eagerly expect the event —

Our new Army is getting into the field, and from every appearance, will be a very formidable one - our greatest want is a sufficient quantity of Specie for the payment of our troops, tho we think this ob-

objeale is not insurmountable, we yet finis it a disagreeable circumstance. —

There are men among us — tolerably well inform'd, and not disaffected to our cause — who admit a probability of your Provinces not resenting the — outrage committed on them by G. Britain. they say you are entirely unprepared for even resistance and that as you are entirely a commercial people, the loss you have already suffer'd in the West Indies and Europe, together with what you will most likely experience in the E. Indies, must put it out of your power to engage in the matter with any prospect of succes. and that therefore you will gladly accept of such terms as will bring with them a restitution of your ~~lands~~ property — let them be ever so ignominious — Is such an event possible! Heaven forbid! —

I must confess myself somewhat — apprehensive, that Russia may discover a cloven foot in the business of the Neutrality, but at the same time acknowledge my reason for such fears to exist only in the favourable construction of the conduct of England ~~to~~ in their late mea=

measures against the dutch; for how in the name of common sense would they engage in a new quarrel unless they had some secret assurances of assistance?

I freely grant that from the commencement of the dispute with Am.a England has never discovered any striking marks of unison, but at the same time their affairs never were desperate, only with respect to Am.a — whereas if they have engaged in this new matter without such assurances of assistance as I allude to, for the soul of me I cannot devine what will save them from total ruin, in a National point of view. With respect to Public matters we have little to fear - much to hope - whatever may be the determination of Russia, provided your people exert themselves, therefore we will leave the event to time, and say some thing on private affairs — —

A person was with me this morning who left N.o L. Hawkins well the 1.st day of March in S.t Eustatia - my brother with him - He informs me that without any discrimination the

the property of St. Eustatia was totally confiscat
- that part of it intended for European exports de
already shipped off - the Stores of dry goods lock
and under the care of the Quarter Master Gen
- I hope Mr. H. has, previous to the capture
of the Island, began and made progress in sale
and remittances - I know of some shipments
which arrived safe from him, on this Coast
tho I am unable to say what amount —

Abt. 8 weeks ago Capt. Brown sailed for
Port-au-Prince with a load of sugars, such par
on freight, as his title will not purchase —
Lorden's him if convoy offered for France
to take advantage of it and sail for that
kindom, if not, and he was obliged to risk his
passage on the sole dependence of his own
strength, to go by all means to Amsterdam
- I have no doubt, if he goes entirely on freig.
but you will receive a remittance of £6000
Sterl. on acct. of St. Hooper & Co. Owners of
Brig. Gates — In Port-au-Prince he goes
consigned Messrs. Campany & Co., who have ord
to

to give you immediate notice of the Ships arrival with them, and to request insurance to be made if she goes a single Ship, which I must request you will comply with. — Should gentlr. if she goes to France, consign her, and order Nt. proceeds of her monies remitted you —

Within about a month from this time, perhaps six weeks, will sail from Norwich, in Connect. a fine new letter of Marque Ship, mounting 16. nine pound cannon, commanded by Capt. Henry Billings, for Port-au-Prince, with a cargo that will nearly purchase a load of sugars — She has provisional orders to go to Amsterdam —

This Ship I at present am sole owner of, but intend selling the one half to Messrs. Sears and Smith, if we can agree on the terms, and the remaining half shall charge to the concern of Jn. De Neufville & Son &c, provided you express no objections — I think of her size, this will be as fast sailing and in every respect as fine a ship, as any that floats —

This packet goes by the Ship

Ship Minerva, Capt. Moses Brown, belonging to Messrs. Nath.l & Jn.o Tracy of New Bury —

These gentlemen have fitted the Minerva, solely for the Amsterdam trade, and intend if the business answers their expectations to employ other good vessels in it —

I have in former letters informed you of the consequence of this house, and can now with propriety say, that I think it of the first importance in this part of the world — I have, in several conversations, endeavoured to convince Messrs. Tracy's that a trade to your city will prove much more to their advantage, than a connection with Bilboa or any other port in Spain — The finishing stroke to conviction with them, depends very much on yourselves — Attend minutely to their orders, and endeavour to comply minutely with their requests — Should they want an advance at any time, and you do not find it inconvenient to make it, perhaps it may not be amiss to do it — As far as they promise, I think you may depend on them —

Mr. Nat. Tracy, must undoubtedly be

be a man of the first interest and influence in this government, if he lives a few years, of which there is great probability as he is a young man

I should enclose you an amt. in bills by this conveyance, were it not that Capt. Brown tells me he may be six weeks, which will give him a very long passage, and that another ship sails directly for Amsterdam within a fortnight or three weeks; likewise a number of supplys will offer for Spain —

You may rely on it, that the amt. mention'd in the brig Gates will be remitted you by me within the term of six months from that time —

If you can execute the order No. 1 — enclosed, for Sealery &c and charge it to me, you will much oblige me; if you do, send it by the Minerva —

The order No. 2. Mr. Tristram Dalton of Newbury, requests may be executed, if practicable, and sent by the Minerva —

The Ship Latitude to above, that will sail in a fortnight, is called the Robin-Hood

and

and I am apprehensive will go consigned to M
Fr. Hodgson — You may rest assured every —
honorable endeavour shall be used to have
you addressed on the occasion ——

May 7.

My not going as soon to —
Providence as expected, gives me an opptty
of adding a few lines —

Last night arrived here a frigate &
6 weeks from France — She brings us the —
agreeable intelligence of the dutch having
entered vigorously into a war against England
and that the armed Neutrality were —
determined to pursue steadily their first
object — In this view of matters hope every
thing on our part, as we fear nothing on —
yours — When we meet again I not only ex[pect]
to congratulate you on an happy issue to t[he]
present war, but likewise on a more than —
wished for flourishing state of our priv[ate]
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